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SUBJECT: HIGH-LEVEL MEETING PLANNED WITH PGA ON INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE

REF: USUN 753

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for Reasons 1.4 (B and D).

¶1. (C) Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. Adel Al-Jubeir told Ambassador Khalilzad in a September 30 phone conversation that the Saudis have agreed with General Assembly President (PGA) Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann to hold a high level session on inter-faith dialogue November 12 or 13, which the Secretary General would support. According to Al-Jubeir, Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal met with d'Escoto, who believed an agreement had been reached with the Vatican. Al-Jubeir said Terje Larson would support the process, adding that King Abdullah would attend the high level session, along with several heads of state including UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Philippines President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, and many European and Arab leaders. King Abdullah intends to reach out to President Bush regarding his possible participation.

¶2. (C) During an October 1 meeting with Ambassador Khalilzad, the Secretary General said he believed the Vatican will not oppose, although is not enthusiastic about, the high level session. However, the Vatican wants to change the Madrid Conference's final declaration, which was not coordinated with other faiths, to take account of Vatican concerns. He told Ambassador Khalilzad the high level session would be a significant event involving Middle Eastern and Muslim leaders, possibly the Spanish King, and many members of the General Assembly. He looked forward to senior level U.S. participation and said it would be good for President Bush to come and speak at the session. The SYG will be available to attend on November 12.

Khalilzad